

## HAPLESS HAMILTONS!

Full Particulars of Their Execution—Their Last Words and Acts.

How they Hunted Heaven from the Hangman's Rope To-day.

Steidle's Sinful, Sneaking Slay-ers are Scientifically Strangled.

Full History of the Horrible Murder for Which they Died.

Thrilling Account of the Search After and Capture of the Fiends.

The Wild Excitement and Threats of Lynching at Warrensburg.

How the Brave Officers Saved the Prisoners from Mob Violence.

The Confession, Trial, Conviction Sentence and Execution.



BILLIE HAMILTON.

## The Last Scenes.

The law of the land, just and inexorable, has been vindicated, and the Hamiltons, the savage and brutal slayers of Carl Steidle, are men in memory only. Nothing remains but their bodies in the Potter's field, and the memory of their crime. That this is right, no man in the great state of Missouri, having any value for his life, can doubt. The law says, "an eye for an eye," and the law is satisfied. The lives of these two men were not taken in revenge, but for the example of those who would follow in their footsteps. The execution is a warning alike to the robber and the drunkard, for to these two evils do they owe their death.

## THE LAST RAILROAD RIDE

was taken by the condemned men, William and Charles Hamilton, on Thursday evening, from Sedalia to Warrensburg, in charge of Sheriff H. H. Russell and his deputies. They were taken from the jail here at 3 o'clock and thence to the depot, where the first passenger train was waiting. A large crowd of people was present to witness their departure, and it was with difficulty that the sheriff made his way to the car. On the road to Warrensburg they chatted pleasantly with their guards, Charlie, the while smoking a cigar. The two prisoners, although chained together, had very little to say to each other. Just before the train reached Warrensburg, and

NEAR THE SCENE OF THE MURDER, they alighted and walked to the Simmons house, Sheriff Russell trying thus to thwart the crowd which had assembled at the depot. In this he was unsuccessful, and was met, long before he reached the hotel, by the excited and tumultuous mass of humanity. They swarmed around him, blocking his way, trying to get a sight of the prisoners. Once at the house, the howling mob could not go through its walls, and the condemned men were safe from public gaze. They both ate a hearty supper, and seemed remarkably light-hearted. In their rooms were the death watch and their spiritual advisers, and not until near midnight did they try to sleep. Charlie slept soundly until 5 o'clock, but Billy was restless, and arose shortly after 4 o'clock. He dressed himself neatly, and busied himself until breakfast in reading and chatting to those around him. At the hour named Charlie arose, and kneeling by his bedside

OFFERED AN AUDIBLE PRAYER to God for the reception of his soul and the forgiveness of his sins. Their breakfast consisted of chicken, ham, fried eggs, potatoes, bread and coffee. Of this Charlie ate heartily, drinking two cups of coffee, and smacking his lips in evident relish of the repast. Billy was more dainty, scarcely touching anything, and sipping his coffee in a listless, absent-minded way. During the day a boy bought and sent to Charlie a fine watermelon. Charlie ordered that it be cut in two and one-half sent to Billy, at the same time offering it as a peace-offering, and with the request that it be received as such.

AFTER SOME HESITATION Billy acceded to this, but said it went "strongly against the grain; don't much like to, but will have to forgive him."

## THE RIDE OF DEATH.

At 10:15 a carriage and the body-guard of armed men arrived at the entrance to the hotel, the guards surrounding the carriage and forming a double column of



CHARLIE HAMILTON.

gleaming swords and bayonets from the hotel door to the vehicle. Fifteen minutes later Sheriff Russell appeared, with the prisoners in charge of the deputies, and made his way to the carriage, they following him. Charlie was in front and stepped lightly down the steps. Billy was slower, and leaned heavily on his guard. The line of march was then taken up, the cavalcade moving north on Holden street to Pine, and thence west to the place of execution. On the way the following conversation occurred between the condemned men:

## TOO MUCH LEVITY.

Billy was laughing and making fun of the guard surrounding them, and seemed to be enjoying himself immensely. "This must be a pleasure ride," said Charlie; "you had better be thinking of your fate."

"Ah," said Billy, "that is not troubling me. I can stand it better than you can." "Have you made peace with your God?" asked Charlie, in a solemn tone. "I am better prepared than you. Are you prepared to die?"

"Yes," said Billy, after a short pause, during which both were looking out of the carriage window, "to make a statement on the gallows and tell the truth about this matter."

"You had better do that yourself," replied Charlie, "I have nothing new to tell."

Here Sheriff Russell interposed and begged them to remember the occasion, and not spend their last half-hour on earth in vituperation and sinful quarreling.

## AT THE SCAFFOLD.

When the procession arrived at the ground, considerable difficulty was experienced in forcing a way for the carriage through the immense throng of people. It is estimated that 15,000 people were present, all trying to get a position near the guard line, in order to hear what might be said, and the task of making one's way through the ranks was no easy one, letting alone the carriage and fifty soldiers on foot. The Hamiltons stepped from the carriage to the ground, and so far as a casual observer could see, ascended the steps of the scaffold as if going to their own private rooms. The scaffold was built up as to face the north, the trap near the north edge, the steps from the south, and chairs placed along the east and west sides. Charlie, the

## FIRST TO MOUNT THE STEPS.

passed to the east side and took the front seat, facing the audience on the north. Billy went to the left and took a seat. They were followed by Rev. Hermann, of Sedalia; Sheriff Russell, James Gossage and others of the death watch. On the scaffold, Mr. Russell stepped to the front and spoke as follows:

"Gentlemen, I hope and trust you all realize the awful solemnity and terrible responsibility of the proceedings about to be enacted here, and observe that decorum and reverence due an occasion so fraught with the tragedy of the law, made by man to protect himself and society, has made necessary."

He then asked the Hamiltons if they had anything to say, and Charlie came forward and said:

## CHARLIE'S SPEECH.

"Kind fellow creatures, you all know that I am doomed to die, and I die for an offense I have never committed. You all heard the evidence, which pointed out my innocence. Although convicted, and with the rope of the law around my neck, I am standing here before God and man and assert that the blow I struck that man did not cause his death. All know these facts. I am prepared to die, and hope to meet you all in heaven. As God above knows, all the statements I have made are true. Let this be a warning to you against false friends. I believed this man" [pointing to Billy] "to be my friend, and you see what he has brought me to. False friends will get you into trouble. I hope you will remember me. God bless you all."

Billy then arose and spoke in broken English as follows:

## "OLD INNOCENCE!"

"Gentlemen of the assembly, my friend, all I had on earth, has been killed, and the jury found me guilty of the crime. Circumstances are against me, and accordingly, I must die. He" [Charlie] "has convicted me, but, gentlemen, I am not guilty. I have made many mistakes in my life—all men commit errors, but I would not kill a man. Let the scientists exhumate the body and it will be found that the blow struck by that man was the cause of his death. What I did was through fear of him, and I loved my own life. He would have killed me as he did my best friend. He held him down on the rail and made me get away. I am not afraid to die, and face death like a man."

The two men knelt while Rev. Hermann offered a prayer in the German language, and at its conclusion Billy rose and took a seat, while Charlie remained kneeling and offered an audible prayer. He prayed earnestly, and seemed truly repentant. Then the condemned men took leave of those around them, shaking hands with all on the platform and then with each other. While their hands were clasped, Charlie said:

"Do you forgive me?" "Yes," said Billy. "Thank God for that!" ejaculated Charlie. They were then

## PLACED ON THE TRAP.

facing north, their legs and arms pinioned, the nooses adjusted, the black caps put on, and everything made ready for the flight of two souls into eternity.

Charlie, his voice muffled by the ominous black cap, his frame trembling with emotion, continued to pray. His last words were: "Before God I am innocent of this crime." "And so am I," came from the other one.

At 11:35 a. m., Sheriff Russell, seizing a large hand-axe, raised it aloft, and with the words, "Boys, may the Lord have mercy on your souls!" let it fall, severing the rope that lay between the Hamiltons and eternity.

## THE LAST OF EARTH.

When the drop fell the bodies shot down through the floor, and for several seconds not a motion was perceptible in either of them; then they began to twirl around and had to be steadied by those above.

The coroner, Dr. W. V. Smith, then came forward, and examined their pulses, as follows:

Charlie Hamilton, at the end of one minute, pulse 60.

Two minutes, 50.

Three minutes, 80.

Four minutes, 120.

Five minutes, 140.

Ten minutes, 100 and very irregular.

Dead in twelve and one-half minutes.

Billy, at end of one minute, 46.

Two minutes, 72.

Three minutes, 100.

Four minutes, 108.

Five minutes, 72.

Six minutes, 100 and very fluctuating.

Light pulse until ten and one-half minutes, and pronounced dead.

They were cut down in twenty-one minutes and placed in plain pine coffins stained the color of walnut.

The coffins were taken charge of by Green B. Lamm, the city sexton, and will be buried to-day in the Potter's field.

The Dr. Lee, of Pleasant Hill, who obtained permission from Billy to apply electricity to his dead body, failed to appear, but telegraphed Sheriff Russell to hold the body for him, which that gentleman refused to do.

## SHERIFF RUSSELL

was seen by a BAZOO reporter after the execution, and asked how he felt. "It was a solemn affair," said Henry "and I am glad that it is over with."

"Had you any sympathy for the boys?" "Yes, it was but natural to feel some sympathy for two young men thus cut off in the prime of life."

"But how did you manage to perform your part of the execution so bravely?" "I kept the memory of the foul murder always before me, and never lost sight of the dead body of the poor German."

"Then you have no fear that you have executed innocent men?"

"I should say not," replied the gentleman, with an incredulous smile at the reporter. "If those two men were not guilty, I never want to see the back of my neck."

## THE MEDICAL FACT.

Half-minute examinations were made of the pulses of the two men by Dr. W. V. Smith, coroner, assisted by Drs. J. M. Ward, of Cornelia, Johnson county; J. F. Robinson, of Leeton, Johnson county; G. R. Hunt and James I. Anderson, of Warrensburg; B. J. Fewell, of Odessa, and Z. R. Adams. They all expressed some surprise that Billy should die first, Charlie being so much the larger man. The drop was the same on both ropes.

The working of the trap was perfection itself and reflected credit on its maker, Or. Stillwell, who made the traps through which both Daniel and Davidson dropped into the other world. The ropes were half-an-inch in diameter, of new hemp, and well oiled. The knot around Charlie's neck had to be cut before it could be taken off.

## PREFATORY.

There are those who believe the life of the newspaper chronicler a ceaseless round of gay pleasure and excitement—a path strewn with roses and hedged with feast, frolic and free passes, and these same people wonder he is so callous, so hard-hearted, when he can deliberately pen the most cruel things of his fellowman. Could they but know how his heart aches when duty to an inexorable public and an exacting master compels him to delve into the secret sorrows of the convicted and perhaps repentant culprit and pen in all its terrible hideousness the developments of a human heart the law has doomed to extermination and turning a deaf ear to the pleadings of the victim, detail in all their cold-bloodedness that being's misdeeds, they might perhaps judge the reporter a little less harshly. But be that as it may, it becomes the duty of the BAZOO reporter to give to-day the history of a terrible crime and its consequences, and he will do so and "nothing extenuate or ought set down in malice."

## A GASTLY APRIL FOOL.

Early on the morning of April 1, 1884, as a workman was hurrying to his labor along the Missouri Pacific railroad track in the cut just east of Warrensburg, he suddenly came upon a ghastly object which lay in his path. It was a torn and mutilated body of a human being whose bloody face and staring eyes though stiff in death seemed to appeal to him for succor. For one moment the laborer stood terrified with horror. Then recovering himself he hastened back to the city and told his story. Soon throngs of people began to pass down the railroad. A surging crowd attended where the remains lay and gazed in awe. The coroner came, with him were men with a stretcher. The poor mangled form was tenderly lifted to the stretcher. Strong arms carried it to the depot. A jury was summoned. The whole town came and looked at the corpse, but each shook their head and turned away. They knew him not.

## IT WAS THE OLD, OLD STORY.

A tramp stranger; a bottle of whiskey; a rushing train; a groan—death—an unknown grave. A mother's breaking heart vainly waiting news from her wandering boy. Such at least, was the general opinion. Such the coroner's verdict, rendered by six good men and true. Then this little message went abroad over the land.

## KILLED BY THE CARS.

"Warrensburg, April 1.—An unknown man supposed to be a Montserrat coal miner was killed at Warrensburg, some time early yesterday morning. His body was mangled in the most terrible manner making it impossible to recognize him."

## IN KANSAS CITY

Two young men were standing on the depot platform. With them stood a woman, a courtesan. The young men's faces wore a look of disapprobation but otherwise bore evidences of intelligence. "E'res your Times?" "All about the killin' at Warrensburg" shouted a newsboy. The two men shuddered perceptibly. Their eyes met. One of them beckoned to the boy whom he gave a nickle and took from him a paper nervously. He glanced over its columns, his face relaxed into a peculiar smile.

"Its all right I guess Billy," he said, handing the paper to his companion and pointing to a paragraph. As he spoke his eyes wandered to the woman. She did not seem to notice them.

He called Billy, glanced at the paragraph—"I guess so" he said.

"We can go back to Sedalia?" Said the other.

"Yes," said Billy.

## AT WARRENSBURG.

Among those who had gazed upon the mangled body in the depot was a tall fine featured gentleman. He was the county sheriff. His name H. H. Russell. He looked on but said nothing. He seemed to be thinking. When they suggested accident, he only shook his head. When the jury gave their verdict, he listened but shook his head again. He turned from the depot and went to the hotel and sat down in the office.

Presently the proprietor came in. "Mr. Cottrell," said he, "where is your hired boy, I want my boots blacked?"

"Charlie has left," said Cottrell.

"When?"

"Last night."

"Why?"

"I do not know."

"Where?"

"I do not know."

"With whom?"

"His brother."

"Where was his brother?"

"He came from Sedalia."

"When?"

"Last night."

"With whom?"

"A stranger."

"Where is the stranger?"

"I do not know."

"Why do you ask?"

"Because"—Mr. Russell got up and went out. He tried to find the three men. They were gone. He went back and looked at the corpse. The train came in. A gentleman got off. He knew Mr. Russell and spoke to him. They talked of the dead man. Then of other things.

"By the way" said the stranger, "I saw Mr. Cottrell's bell boy on the train yesterday. He was in company with another man. They had a woman with them and paid her fare to Sedalia. They seemed to have plenty of money."

"I just heard Charlie had quit and drawn his wages," said Russell.

"Good bye, the train is going."

Mr. Russell sprang on the last car. When the train reached Sedalia, he got off.

## AT SEDALIA.

Marshal Shy, was standing on the platform. He went up and shook hands with him. They walked up town to the station house.

"Do you know a man named Hamilton?" said Russell.

"Have heard of him," said Shy.

"Where is he?"

"I do not know, he left here Saturday."

"Did he return?"

"Not that I know of."

"Who went with him?"

"A man who worked at the shops, a German."

"I want to find Hamilton."

"What for?"

"I believe he is a murderer."

"Is he here?"

"I heard so."

"We will see."

Shortly after Sheriff Russell, his deputy, R. Baldwin, Marshal Shy, Officers James Gossage, McPherson and McGhee, sat in the marshal's office. What they said was kept secret. When they left, it was to look for the Hamiltons and the woman.

It was found they had been at the Leroy House, but had been sent away. Then it was learned the woman had gone to the country. Officer McGhee followed her and found her.

"Yes," she came to town with the Hamiltons she said, "Billy had a room on East Fifth street. It was up a pair of stairs, went up from the outside of the dwelling."

McGhee came back to town and

reported. The woman followed him. He watched her.

Russell and Gossage found the room but the Hamiltons were not there.

Across the street was to be a ball that night. Perhaps they would come to the ball or go to their room.

The officers consulted—they must set a watch—Who—not an officer for the Hamiltons knew all the officers.

At the station was

## A YOUNG MAN.

He was trusty, but had been unfortunate. He was a tramp, and was arrested. On his release, being highly educated, the city had employed him to do some writing while he waited news from his people who were wealthy. He knew the Hamiltons. They would employ him.

They came back. The young man was sent to the dance; he sat by a window, looking out on to the Hamiltons' room. Nine o'clock, ten o'clock passed, they did not come. Eleven o'clock struck, still no one, but hark!

Two young men are walking up the street. They stop in front of the steps and look up. It is dark, you cannot see their features. They converse in a low tone. Then they go up the steps enter the room and strike a light. It is the Hamiltons.

The watcher over the way rises from his seat, yawns sleepily and says, "I must go to bed."

He goes out onto the street then he rouses up, and hurries to the station. Russel, Baldwin, Gossage and McPherson are there waiting for him.

"Well," says Mr. Russell, as he enters.

"They are there" he replies.

"Let us go," says Gossage.

They look at their revolvers by the gas light to see they are in order, then they file out. In a few moments they are standing beneath the window of the room where the Hamiltons are sleeping. Across the street are the lights and music and the dance. Over here are red handed murderers and robbers—between them stand the guardians of the law.

## THE CAPTURE.

"How shall we proceed?" says Russell.

"Quiet and easy is best," replies Gossage.

"Who shall go up?" asks Russell.

"I will," says Gossage, and he mounts the steps and knocks at the door.

"Who is there?" asks Charles Hamilton.

"Only me," replies Gossage.

"And who is me?"

"Open and see."

The door swings slowly on its hinges.

"How are you Charlie?" says Jim, entering. "I want to see you a minute on business."

Billy is sitting on the bed. In his hand is a cocked revolver but Gossage does not seem to see it is pointed at him.

"Come over and set down I want to ask you something," he says to Charlie. "Leave the door open its too warm in here," he continues.

As Charlie crosses the room, Gossage turns to the bed. "Hello! are you here too Billy?" What are you doing with that pistol," he said.

"I did not know who it was," replies Billy.

"Well, put it down, I am no burglar."

"But what do you want?"

"Not to fight, but if you do not put it down, we will have to before I talk to Charlie," said Gossage rising.

Billy laid down the pistol upon the pillow, and as he did so, Russell, Baldwin and McPherson entered the room, having slipped quietly up the steps, and Gossage going to the bed picked up the pistol.

"Charles and William Hamilton, you are my prisoners," said Sheriff Russell.

"For what?" said Charlie.

"On this warrant charging you with murder," replied the sheriff.

"All right," said Charlie.

"Murder, what is that?" says Billy.

"You will know soon enough," said the sheriff, and the prisoners were conveyed to the station house where they were assigned separate cells, and the young man who had watched for their coming from the bail room, was assigned to see they had no correspondence with each other. The next morning they were put upon the train and taken

BACK TO WARRENSBURG to have their preliminary examination. But notwithstanding, the chain of evidence was so weak, there were few who could believe their guilt would be proven, and many continued to condemn sheriff Russell for his wild suspicions. On arriving at Warrensburg, the prisoners were kept strenuously apart, and closely questioned. Unfortunately for them they talked. Their stories were contradictory; they wove a web whose tissues entangled them. At last Billy broke down

HE CONFESSED THE CRIME.

In substance, he said:

He became acquainted with the

deceased, whose name was Carl Steidle, in Sedalia and soon learned that he had considerable money. Steidle said that he wanted to go west. Hamilton informed him that he had a friend at Warrensburg and suggested that they go to that place together and from there the three would go west.

In accordance with Hamilton's suggestion, he and his victim left this city last Sunday evening for Warrensburg. They got off at Montserrat, Hamilton pretending that he thought they had reached their destination. This of course was done for a purpose. From Montserrat they walked to Warrensburg, arriving there about dark. Hamilton at once introduced Steidle to his friend, Charles Hamilton, and then taking the latter aside, told him that the stranger had money and wanted to go west.

The cupidity of Charles Hamilton was at once aroused, and he remarked, "That is too fine a fish" to allow to escape, Then

## THE MURDER AND ROBBERY

was planned. The unsuspecting German was then decoyed into a deep cut near the town, and upon arriving there, the bloody deed was committed without any preliminaries or loss of time. Picking up a heavy track wrench which lay near, Chas. Hamilton dealt Steidle a powerful blow on the head, felling him to the ground, after which he threw himself upon his victim and

## FINISHED HIS MURDEROUS WORK

by choking the remaining spark of life out of the dying man. The two fiends then rifled the person of the dead man, taking his money, papers, and watch and the checks for his baggage which had been sent to Kansas City. They then placed the body across the railroad track and going into the woods about a mile and a half from the railroad track, built a fire and burned up all of the effects of the murdered man, except his valuables. The watch they buried. They then climbed up on an embankment overlooking the track and saw the express train

## RUN OVER THE BODY.

The train did not stop and the murderers descending from the bank, walked to Centerview. There they took a train and went to Kansas City, where they procured the trunk of their victim, by presenting his baggage check, and after securing some gold coin contained therein, it is surmised about \$100, shipped the baggage to Sedalia, they following on Tuesday.

Billie, during and after, his confession was very cool and requested Sheriff Russell to send

A TELEGRAM TO CAROLINE STEIDLE, the sister